

Prof. Odette Koch

Prof. Odette Koch www.okoch.co.za is an orthopaedic surgeon based in Pretoria, South Africa, with a specialised interest in upper-limb reconstruction, including shoulder, elbow, wrist and hand surgery. She is Head of the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery at 1 Military Hospital and practices in the Upper Limb Unit, with additional private practice at Netcare Pretoria East Hospital. Her clinical practice includes complex trauma and elective upper-limb reconstruction, with a growing focus on reconstructive surgery for patients with tetraplegia.

Prof. Koch has developed a strong commitment to tetrahand surgery through her work with patients with cervical spinal cord injury at [Mediclinic Muelmed](#), one of South Africa's established spinal rehabilitation centres. In the absence of formal local training opportunities, she has actively pursued expertise in tetraplegic upper-limb reconstruction through international congress attendance, cadaveric training, microsurgical courses and clinical collaboration with upper-limb units in South Africa. Her work has focused on restoring function and independence for tetraplegic patients through tendon and nerve transfer surgery, helping expand access to this specialised service locally.

She is the immediate past President of the South African Orthopaedic Association and the first woman to hold this position. She previously served as Chairperson of the South African Orthopaedic Registry and contributed internationally as programme editor for the AO Trauma Shoulder and Elbow Taskforce, supporting orthopaedic education and training worldwide.

A passionate teacher and mentor, Prof. Koch holds an honorary lecturer position at the University of Pretoria, where she completed both her undergraduate and specialist orthopaedic training. She remains deeply committed to surgical education, professional development and advancing high-quality orthopaedic care within the South African National Defence Force and the wider South African community. Alongside her academic and clinical work, she is actively involved in outreach through Operation Healing Hands, providing reconstructive surgical care to underserved patients. For Prof. Koch, tetrahand reconstruction combines technical upper-limb surgery with meaningful restoration of independence and quality of life, and she remains committed to advancing this specialised field for patients in South Africa.